



Karen Quebedeaux Smith
Notary Public
Justice of the Peace
Ward 3, District 6
182 Northwood Road
Arnaudville, LA 70512
337-852-1705
notary.jp@karengsmith.com

12/02/2021

Louisiana Ethics Administration Program
P.O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am a Justice of the Peace for St. Landry Parish, District 6. I am writing you in reference to payments made under La R.S. 13:2591(A). I was recently informed by the St. Landry Parish President, Jessie Bellard, that payment under the above statute would be withheld pending my completion of the Louisiana Board of Ethics Training. He indicated that this is the law, but I have been advised by the Attorney General's office in an opinion dated February 23, 2015, Docket No. 2014-1537, that the Code of Governmental Ethics does not have jurisdiction over Justices of the Peace. As the Judicial Code defines a Justice of the Peace as a Judge, and La. R.S. 42:1167 provides that all judges shall be governed exclusively by the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which shall be administered by the Judiciary Commission, it is clear that Judges are exempt from the provisions of the Ethics Code. This opinion was furnished to the Parish President, who advised that he did not have to follow the opinion as it was not issued in St. Landry Parish.

I do not believe that there is a provision of the law that allows a Parish to withhold the payment due under LA. R.S. 13:2591 (A) for failure to complete Ethics Training, when Judges are exempt from the provisions of the Ethics Code and would like an opinion on the same that I could provide to the Parish President to avoid this conflict annually in the future.

12/02/2021

I've attached a copy of the original letter from the parish requiring the training, along with email correspondence between Jessie Bellard and I once I completed the training.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please give me a call at 337-852-1705.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Karen Smith
Justice of the Peace
St. Landry Parish
Ward 3, District 6

ST. LANDRY PARISH GOVERNMENT

118 S. Court Street, Suite 133 • PO Drawer 1550 • Opelousas, LA 70571
(337) 948-3688 • stlandrypg.org
Jessie Bellard, *Parish President*



November 9, 2021

Dear St. Landry Parish Justice of the Peace or Constable,

Our records indicate that you have not completed the 2021 Louisiana Ethics Training for public servants. This is a mandatory training that St. Landry Parish Government employees are required to take.

You may complete the training by copy and pasting the link in your browser, <https://laethics.net/EthicsTraining/login.aspx> or you may contact me to schedule a date and time for you to use one of our computers.

If you have already taken the training, please forward a copy of your certificate to our offices as soon as possible.

You have until November 29, 2021 to complete this training! We will not process your December 2, 2021 if you do not. Call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

KALI JACOB

HR Assistant/Payroll Clerk
ST LANDRY PARISH GOV

Louisiana Ethics Board Training

Karen Smith <kqsmith.notary@outlook.com>

Mon 11/29/2021 2:46 PM

To: jbellard@slpgov.net <jbellard@slpgov.net>; Candace Miles <cmiles@stlandrypg.net>

Cc: Bourgeois, Natalie <BourgeoisN@ag.louisiana.gov>

Good afternoon Jessie & Candace,

I would like to advise you that I did complete the Louisiana State Board of Ethics training. I did so despite the fact that I am not governed by the Louisiana State Board of Ethics, but by a Judicial Code of Ethics, all confirmed by the Louisiana Attorney General's Office.

I did not complete this because of the threat delivered by Candace from Jessie that if I don't complete it, I won't get paid. Instead, I had a conversation with a former member of your staff. They explained to me that there was an issue on a past audit from a Justice of the Peace not completing the ethics training. I am absolutely a team player and I don't want my actions to result negatively in any way on St. Landry Parish. However, I will be working to get clarity regarding this with the assistance of the Attorney General's Office.

Completing training is not a problem for me in any way. In fact, when my constables were faced with trying to complete online training, while knowing little to nothing of the technology required to complete it, I volunteered to assist them. On 3 separate occasions I invited them into my home to complete ALL of their required training. I listened to everything they listened to and read everything they read, including the Louisiana Ethics Training. So, you see, I'm completing the training multiple times. I'm sure that my parish appreciates my efforts, as my Attorney General's office does, as they have already thanked me via email.

I pray that in the future, you will consider having a conversation with someone before delivering an insulting "do it or else" message.

Best regards,

Karen Q. Smith

Justice of the Peace &

Notary Public

182 Northwood Road

Arnaudville, LA 70512

337-852-1705 phone

515-724-6207 fax

kqsmith.notary@outlook.com

Re: Louisiana Ethics Board Training

Jessie Bellard <jbellard@slpgov.net>

Mon 11/29/2021 2:54 PM

To: Karen Smith <kqsmith.notary@outlook.com>

Cc: Candace Miles <cmiles@stlandrypg.net>; Bourgeois, Natalie <BourgeoisN@ag.louisiana.gov>

It is no threat, it is the law and you have to comply. If you don't comply then we don't get the state monies to pay you. Again it is not a threat if you wish to discuss the issue i am more than glad to talk to you. It really doesn't matter who you spoke with, I will not pay anyone unless they comply with the law. Plain and simple

Sincerely,

Jessie M. Bellard

Parish President - St. Landry Parish

118 S. Court Street, Suite 133

PO Drawer 1550

Opelousas, LA 70571

(337) 948-3688

Cell (337)-351-1482

jbellard@stlandrypg.net



On Mon, Nov 29, 2021 at 2:46 PM Karen Smith <kqsmith.notary@outlook.com> wrote:

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BATON ROUGE LA 707

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